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LETTER DATED 30 JULY 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I should like to refer to the letter dated 10 July 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the Secretary-General (S/1997/534), which requested the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of six months, and to respond to certain incorrect and misleading points therein.

Firstly, it must be emphasized that the fundamental cause of the precarious situation in South Lebanon is the murderous acts of the terrorist organizations, mainly Hizbollah, who use Lebanese territory as a base of aggression against Israel; by the Lebanese Government's refusal to disarm these groups; and by the aid and encouragement given to terrorist organizations both by the Lebanese Government and by States well known for their support of international terror. These acts are contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Lebanon cannot engage in international terrorism with impunity.

Israel's responses to attacks have therefore been taken solely in self-defence. They are regretfully rendered necessary precisely because the Lebanese Government has been, and unfortunately remains, ineffectual, unable or unwilling to carry out its basic duty, under international law and the Charter, of preventing its territory from being used as a launching pad for Hizbollah and other terrorist groups' attacks against Israel and its citizens. In fact, the Lebanese Government has repeatedly had the opportunity to extend its authority over all its territory and pacify the areas in question. Yet the Beirut Government has demonstrated an incredible and inexplicable inability to act on this matter. In reality it is clear that the Lebanese Government's efforts at recovery from many years of ruthless civil war, referred to in the letter of the Chargé d'affaires, are frustrated, not by any alleged activity by Israel, but by its own inaction and ineptitude. Clearly to build a real recovery Lebanon needs first to create a solid foundation of peace and tranquillity.

For its part, Israel would positively welcome a change whereby Lebanon ceases to enable its territory to be illegally used for unprovoked terrorist

attacks, and so puts an end to current situations of attacks on Israel and its territorial integrity. Were it not for the unprovoked and relentless terror emanating from Lebanon, the border with Israel would be calm and safe.

Lebanon's position and policies are the primary obstacle preventing UNIFIL from fulfilling its role as they enable the infiltration of armed terrorists in and through UNIFIL's area of operations, thereby placing on UNIFIL the almost impossible task of trying to deal with a situation for which it was not created and for which it has no mandate.

Moreover, the Government of Lebanon's repeated refusal to return to the conference table to negotiate a Treaty of Peace completely negates its claim in its letter to be truly committed to the Middle East peace process. This peace process is based, as is set out in the invitation issued by the co-sponsors of the Madrid Conference, solely on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Other documents referred to by the Chargé d'affaires in no way constitute a base for negotiations in the Madrid Conference and the ensuing peace process. If the Lebanese Government really wishes to promote a peaceful settlement, it has to prevent the hostile activities of the heavily armed semi-independent terrorist groups present on its territory and to resume direct negotiations with Israel in accordance with the actual terms of reference of the peace process. This is something Israel has repeatedly suggested in the past, lamentably to no avail.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) David PELEG
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.